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DE RUEHSB #0916/01 2840945
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 100945Z OCT 08 2ND ZDS PER NUM SVC'S
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3554
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2347
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2465
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0975
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1743
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2098
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2519
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4951
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1614
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000916

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B.WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: MFA BUNGLES CREDENTIALS CEREMONY, THREATENS ENVOYS

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Katherine Dhanani for reason 1.4 (b) & (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Japanese, French, German and Canadian Ambassador-designates were invited to present letters of credence to President Mugabe on October 9. Unfortunately, only the Japanese Ambassador had his letters ready; the other three explained to the Foreign Ministry that they could not get the letters to Harare on such short notice. At 10 pm on October 8, the MFA called the three and threatened that if they failed to present the next day, they would never be accepted. On October 9, the Japanese Ambassador presented his credentials alone. The others believe Mugabe will reconsider and they will be invited soon to another credentials ceremony. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On October 7, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited Ambassadors-designate from Japan, Canada, Germany and France for meetings with the Chief of Presidential Protocol to discuss presentation of letters of credence; a date for the credentials ceremony was not specified, but it was evident that the GOZ was looking at October 9 or 10. Germany and France informed the Ministry that their Ambassadors-designate did not yet have the letters, and would not be able to present until next week. Canada told the MFA that its Ambassador-designate was currently in South Africa and that Canada's October 14 election was interrupting normal governmental business, so the letters were not available. Shortly after the French had informed the MFA, the Charges d'Affaires from all three countries were convoked for an 11 am meeting with the MFA's Permanent Secretary; fifteen minutes after issuing the convocation, the meeting was canceled.

13. (C) About 10 pm on October 8, an unidentified MFA protocol official called the French and German residences and spoke with the Ambassadors-designate; at about the same time a desk officer called the Canadian Charge. The three diplomats were

told bluntly that if the Ambassadors-designate did not present credentials on October 9, they would never be permitted to present. The protocol official who called the French and German envoys was extremely rude and menacing; the desk officer who called the Canadian was polite but equally unequivocal; the Canadian Charge was told the threat was being made on the direct orders of President Mugabe. In each case, the MFA was informed that the problem was technical in that the letters were simply not ready, rather than political. This explanation was not acknowledged. On October 9, the Japanese Ambassador presented his credentials alone.

¶4. (C) The European Union Heads of Mission discussed the issue during a scheduled meeting on October 9. The French and Germans will send a Note to the Ministry repeating the explanation that the letters were not in hand on October 9. According to the French Charge, they believe the MFA's threats will be reconsidered and the French and Germans expect to be invited to present letters as early as next week. Assuming this takes place, during their meetings with Mugabe the French and German Ambassadors will stress the critical nature of the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe and the urgent need to form a government to lead a response. Following the ceremony, they will state publicly that they presented their credentials to Mugabe as President in the context of the September 15 agreement. They will seek to meet (and be seen meeting) with Tsvangirai as Prime Minister-designate and Lovemore Moyo as Speaker of the National Assembly as soon after the credentials ceremony as possible.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: We hope our counterparts are correct, and

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that Mugabe and the MFA will swiftly back down from their ill-advised threats. If Mugabe persists in responding to a perceived political slight, instead of accepting assurances in writing that failure to present on October 9 was due merely to a technical deficiency, it will be a clear sign that ZANU-PF's siege mentality is preventing any rational consideration of Zimbabwean national interests. END COMMENT.

DHANANI